

Next Steps in Nearshore Habitat Restoration for Puget Sound - the Practitioners Speak Out

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The health of the Puget Sound ecosystem is threatened by a range of environmental problems from booming coastal development to persistent toxic contamination. The narrow fringing nearshore habitats of Puget Sound encompass processes critical to supporting a vibrant living ecosystem. The nearshore is the physical interface between the terrestrial and marine environments, but until recently, little attention has been focused directly on nearshore study and management. Protection and restoration of the Puget Sound nearshore is difficult due to technical uncertainties associated with large-scale, process-based restoration as well as the institutional and collaborative challenges of collective management. This study identifies and characterizes the impediments to protection and restoration of the Puget Sound nearshore by summarizing the collective thinking of 26 nearshore practitioners who were interviewed during the fall of 2004. We present new perspective on the challenges of nearshore restoration and protection as well as innovative solutions and future alternative approaches to maintaining a healthy nearshore environment. We hope the results presented in this study will provoke discussion among nearshore practitioners and the public, and will serve to promote and focus future action.